UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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Varieties.

"In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom
That transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy,
Let us die to set men free
While God is marching on."

—Julia Ward Howe.

"Universalism stands for no defeat in the government of God. It concedes delays and postponements, but never failure."—Horace Greeley.

"Whoever degrades another degrades me. And whatever is done or said returns at last to me."

I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms."—Walt Whitman.

"Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone:
Save thou a soul, and thou shalt save thine own."

—Whittier.

"True worshippers shall worship the Father."

"When ye pray, say, Our Father."—Jesus.

"I pray—that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."—Jesus.

"We being many are one—and every one members one of another."—Paul.

"All minds are of one family."—Channing.

And aged widow said the other day: "God made the world and called it good; and He would not create a Devil to make it bad."

"The man came into the car—he was evidently a clergyman. In a loud voice he cried, pointing his finger at me: "Are you Mr. Phillips?"

"I am, sir."

"Are you trying to free the niggers?"

"Yes, sir, I am an Abolitionist."

"Well, why do you preach your doctrines up here? Why don't you go there?" pointing toward Kentucky, just across the Ohio River.

"Excuse me," said I, "are you a preacher?"

"I am, sir."

"Are you trying to save souls from hell?"

"Yes, sir, that is my business."

"Well, why don't you go there?"

There was a roar and my critic vanished.

—Wendell Phillips.

An Open Letter for Open Minds.

Men and Women! There was once a bogie which people were very much afraid of. Whenever they saw it, it was always at a good distance. They never got near enough to it to see what it was really like, and so they had the queerest notions about it. To make matters worse, they were told the most dreadful things—that this bogie was a terrible monster, that to come near it would be sure to end in the most frightful consequences; and so the very mention of it inspired them with loathing and terror.

But a man came and told the people they were foolish. He did not believe these tales about the bogie. He said there was nothing whatever to be afraid of, that this thing was not a dreadful monster at all, that it was good and would hurt no man.

And the people said this man was mad; they called him an "unbeliever" they said he was a "blasphemer"; and they stoned him and put him to death.

But after a time some of the people saw they had done wickedly. They found that what he had said and what he had been killed for saying was wise and good. And then when he was no longer with them to hear their praises they spoke well of him; they said he was a martyr and a prophet, and they raised a monument to him and named him "the great and good."

The name of that which once they thought to be a monster—is Truth. The truth you hold to-day, men were once afraid of. They would not approach it, they would not seek to know it, they were angry when it was named, they persecuted and put to death those who spoke in its favour, they nailed the Christ on the cross.

And to-day, any new truth in religion ahead of what our parents taught us, is a bogie of which the timid souls are afraid; if they would only come nearer and examine it they would find it to be no monster but an angel in disguise.

For Truth can hurt no man; truth is man's friend; truth is a pearl of great price worth all we can give for it. Blessed is he who seeks truth without fear. Scorn no man's sincere opinion; laugh at no man's honest thought. Seek to know if it be true. Only by seeking canst thou find the treasure. Seek and ye shall find it.

PARSON PAGE.

What Think You of This?

Shakespeare said: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!"

John Ruskin asserts: "Human nature is a noble and beautiful thing; not a foul nor a base thing. All the sin of men I esteem as their disease, not their nature; as a folly which may be prevented, not a necessity which must be accepted. And my wonder, even when things are at their worst, is always at the height which this human nature can attain. Thinking it high, I find it always a higher thing than I thought it; while those who think it low, find it, and will find it, always, lower than they thought it. The fact being that it is infinite, and capable of infinite height and infinite fall; but the nature of it—and here is the faith which I would have you hold with me—the nature of it is in the nobleness, not in the catastrophe."

And these are the words of the Psalmist: "Thou has made him but little lower than God."—viii.,5, R.V.

And here is what the Christian Scriptures say:—

Jesus: "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."—Matt. v., 48.

"The little children—of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."—Matt. xix., 14.

Paul: "We are the off-spring of God."—Acts xvii., 28-29.

"We are the children of God."—Rom., viii., 16.

"Man is the image and glory of God."—I. Cor. xi., 7.

Peter: "Partakers of the Divine nature."—II., i., 4.

John: "Now we are the sons of God."—I., iii., 2.

This is the really Christian doctrine of human nature; that it is naturally good; that pure human nature, as in children, makes the Kingdom of Heaven; that man is a child of God, and a partaker of the Divine nature, made like God; that sin, as in the prodigal, is a departure from man's true nature, and a return to goodness is a coming "to himself," a coming to his own nature again; that he is made in God's likeness. But this Christian doctrine is not the teaching of the popular Churches. Look on that picture, and then on what the old creed-books say:—

"Man—is of his own nature inclined to evil—and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it (man's nature) deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

"Man—cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore, we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God."—Book of Com. Prayer, Art. ix., x.

"We are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil."—Westminster Conf. of Faith.

"By nature born in sin and the children of wrath."—Catechism, Book of Com. Prayer.

"Born in original sin and in the wrath of God."—Baptismal Service, Book Com. Pr.

Which of these two pictures think you is the true one—the picture presented in true Christian doctrine, or that given in the popular Church doctrine? We believe in the natural goodness of human nature, in the natural divinity of man. We believe as Jesus taught in his Parable of the Sower that the seed itself is good, that bad soil, evil conditions, unfavourable circumstances make it appear to be bad when it is good. So we believe as Jesus taught by that Parable that human nature is good, that evil and unfavourable conditions forcing disorder into it, make it look bad when it is not.

And we have Jesus, Paul, the Apostles, Shakespeare, Ruskin, and a great host of prophets and thinkers on our side; and all the nobility, goodness, and heroism of human nature in proof that we are right. What think you?

Give!

That Church is false to itself and to all religion that asks for little, that apologises for its asking, and tolerates the thought of a possible refusal.

Because it speaks to the highest in man the Church cannot allow itself to make bargains; because it is the minister of God, existing only for the things of the spirit, it is bold to claim from man more than friendship could ask, self-interest suggest, or the state enforce.

It asks the unmeasured gift, the fullest service, the utmost self-sacrifice; it dare not ask for less, it may never allow itself to be surprised at any abundance.

That one who boasts how much he has done for the Church, who enumerates his sacrifices and proclaims how faithfully he has served, is but an Ananias condemning himself; no one has done enough, and he who parades his loyalty only betrays his treason. Nothing is too much to give, and the richest offering is mere dust if the giver thinks it worthy. Time, talents, money, service, the Church requires in the name of God and of God's humankind; happy are they upon whom the demand comes for they are able readily to make answer.

Wings.

The wings of the soul are made of love.
There is no other plumage so soft and beautiful.
There are no other pinions so sinewy and strong.
They alone soar dauntlessly sunward.
They sweep from horizon to horizon.
They hover and brood over all the rounded worlds.
They lift when all else is dragging down.
They are buoyant when all else is sinking.
Try your wings.
Spread them, trust yourself to them, exercise them often, hold them ever in readiness.
They refresh weariness, bear up despondency, and make joy deeper and unashamed.
But most of all in the hour of death you will need them, for they alone can waft you over the dark abyss.

—Ernest Crosby.

Salvation by Character.

Salvation means health, wholeness, completeness, perfection. What perfect health is to the body, salvation is to the soul. Salvation is not deliverance from a cruel God, for there is no cruel God; nor escape from the fate of everlasting torments, for there are no everlasting torments; nor safety from a devil, except man's evil self; it is deliverance from the evil within ourselves antagonistic to the soul's health.

What disease is to the body, sin is to the soul. It causes disorder in our spiritual nature; disorder brings discord, pain, and suffering which make a hell within. Jesus said: "Not they that are whole need a physician, but they that are sick; I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He was the mighty Healer and Saviour because he expelled sin from men's hearts, and cured their souls of the corrupting disorders which it caused, and was consequently powerful to make men whole and to lead them towards perfection.

Holiness is this wholeness of character, this saved condition. Holiness is healthiness.

There are two theories of salvation. One, that man is saved by belief in a creed; the other that man is saved by goodness of character. But as men's creeds differ and are contradictory and cannot be equally true, salvation by mere belief in a creed is not possible apart from goodness of character: whereas goodness of character is salvation whether the creed be correct or not. The first theory is identified with so-called orthodox Christianity or Trinitarianism; and the second—salvation by character—with New Testament Christianity or Unitarianism. No mere profession can suffice. Not him that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of the Father. The foolish man who only hears the word is like the one who builds upon the sand, but the wise man who both hears the word and does it is like the one who builds on the rock. Unitarian Christians teach that men are saved by overcoming sin, by doing God's will, by wholeness,—holiness of character, and that a bad character is not acceptable to God, no matter what the bad man's creed may be.

This doctrine agrees with the facts of daily life, with reason and common sense. God judges not by belief or creed, but by what we are. There can be no salvation without good character.

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Not a "Sect."

Unitarianism stands for Unity, and is the opposite of sectarianism. Creeds and opinions cut humanity up into sects. But Unitarianism insists on freedom of thought and liberty of opinion. It puts moral character before creed, and welcomes the fellowship of any man, whatever his opinions, if only he agrees on the importance of living a good life and holds himself a free man in search of truth.

Unitarianism is inclusive, orthodoxy is exclusive, Unitarianism denies that future safety depends on the mere profession of any creed or belief in any set of opinions. But orthodoxy declares that unless men hold to a particular statement of doctrine they shall, "without doubt perish everlastingly." Variety of opinion is natural and inevitable, but if men are unfettered, and enjoy freedom to seek the truth, to accept or reject opinions in the exercise of their own judgment, they will be all the more likely to come nearer together. All earnest seekers are in sympathy. Seeking the light in different ways, they draw nearer to it, though from different directions. Free-seeking, therefore, tends to unity and towards agreement in theology, as in science. Rightly understood, then, the Unitarian movement is not a sect. It does not cut itself off, but is cut off from other men by their exclusiveness and narrowness.

Unitarians are readiest to initiate unsectarian movements in religion for the inclusion of all good and earnest men and women. Dr. W. E. Channing denounced "the system of exclusion and denunciation in religion," and advocated that Universal Church in which "all who partake of the spirit of Christ are admitted. It asks not who has baptised us; whose passports we carry; what badge we wear." Some years ago Dr. Martineau urged the avoidance even of a name that might be taken to stand for doctrine, that would keep men holding different views apart. More recently, the Rev. John Page Hopps, rejoicing in that mental and moral attitude for which Unitarianism stands—put forward the idea of "Our Father's Church," wider than all the sects put together. Another Unitarian minister has attempted to establish "The Citizen Church" as a method of organising the religious sentiment without regard to creed, and he succeeded in drawing together men from every point of the theological compass to unite in one fellowship, agreeing in the following statement of principles:—

(1) To advocate real Christianity in its applications to individual life, to social conditions, to municipal, industrial, and national affairs.
(2) To provide an open door for all who seek good, in free and unfettered search after justice and truth.
(3) To cultivate brotherly fellowship with all mankind and to realise the Fatherhood of God in the Brotherhood of Man.
(4) To encourage methods of co-operation for mutual help and protection in the struggle for existence.
(5) To develop the perfect life declared by Jesus of Nazareth, and to bring the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Unitarian Churches are not a sect—they keep the open door, insist on the mind being open to new light, and aim to draw all men together, seeking, with the Unitarian poet Longfellow, to build—

"The Universal Church—
Lofty as is the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man."

UNITY.

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Another Chance.

"Turn over a new leaf. You've got another chance." That is what we can say to each other here and now. But what about the next world? Will there be another chance beyond the grave for those who miss it here? Beatrice Harraden, in her "Ships that pass in the night," evidently thinks there will be; and in that she agrees with the reasonable theology of Unitarianism.

She pictures the dying consumptive, Mr. Reffold, neglected by his fashionable wife, visited by Bernadine the heroine of the book. Bernadine is an agnostic in rebellion against the "self-protectiveness" of Calvinism, and feeling her way to a grander Faith. She visits the dying and deserted Mr. Reffold out of pity.

He had become quite attached to her, and looked forward eagerly to her visits. He said her voice was gentle and her manner quiet; there was no bustling vitality about her to irritate his worn nerves. He was probably an empty-headed fellow; but it was none the less sad to see him passing away.

He called her "Little Brick." He said that no other epithet suited her so exactly.

There was an anxious look on his face such as people wear when they wish to ask some question of great moment, but dare not begin.

At last he summoned up courage.

"Little Brick," he said, in a weak, low voice, "I have something on my mind. You won't laugh, I know. You're not the sort. I know you're clever and thoughtful, and all that; you could tell me more than all the parsons put together."

"Well," she said kindly, "tell me."

"You must have thought a good deal, I suppose," he continued, "about life and death, and that sort of thing. I've never thought at all. Does it matter, Little Brick? It's too late now; I can't begin to think. But speak to me; tell me what you think. Do you believe we get another chance, and are glad to behave less like curs and brutes? Or is it all ended in that lonely little churchyard here? I've never troubled about these things before, but now I know I am so near that gloomy little churchyard—well, it makes me wonder. As for the Bible, I never cared to read it. I was never much of a reader, though I've got through two or three firework novels and sporting stories. Does it matter, Little Brick?"

"How do I know?" she said gently. "How does anyone know? People say they know; but it is all a great mystery—nothing but a mystery. Everything that we can say can be but a guess. People have gone mad over their guessing, or they have broken their hearts. But still the mystery remains, and we cannot solve it."

"If you don't know anything, Little Brick," he said, "at least tell me what you think: and don't be too learned; remember I'm only a brainless fellow."

"If I were you," she said, "I would not worry. Just make up your mind to do better when you get another chance. One can't do more than that. That is what I shall think of: that God will give each one of us another chance, and that each one of us will take it and do better—I and you and everyone. So there is no need to fret over failure, when one hopes one may be allowed to redeem that failure later on. Besides which, life is very hard. Why, we ourselves recognise that. If there be a God, some Intelligence greater than human intelligence, He will understand better than ourselves that life is very hard and difficult, and He will be astonished not because we are not better, but because we are not worse. At least, that would be my notion of a God. I should not worry, if I were you. Just make up your mind to do better if you get the chance, and be content with that."

"If that is what you think, Little Brick," he answered, "it is quite good enough for me. And it does not matter about prayers and the Bible, and all that sort of thing?"

"I don't think it matters," she said. "I never have thought such things mattered. What does matter is, to judge gently, and not to come down like a sledge-hammer on other people's failings. Who are we, any of us, that we should be hard on others?"

"And not to come down like a sledge-hammer on other people's failings," he repeated slowly. "I wonder if I have ever judged gently."

"I believe you have," she answered.

He shook his head. "No," he said; "I have been a paltry fellow. I have been lying here, and elsewhere too, eating my heart away with bitterness until you came. Since then I have sometimes forgotten to feel bitter. A little kindness does away with a great deal of bitterness."

He turned wearily on his side.

"I think I could sleep, Little Brick," he said, almost in a whisper. "I want to dream about your sermon. And I'm not to worry, am I?"

"No," she answered, as she stepped noiselessly across the room; "you are not to worry."

"Whether there be one God or three—no God or ten thousand—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean. It is not I who say that. Every mother's heart under the sun says that, if she has one."—John Ruskin.

"Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed."—H. Bonar.

Ring out the False, Ring in the True.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out the old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—Tennyson.

His "Best Girl."

A commercial traveller, on arriving at an American hotel, asked at once for his letters. On receiving one from the clerk he read it very eagerly, and then tenderly kissed it. Of course, the men standing around laughed, joked, and chaffed unmercifully. To their surprise, the traveller was quite cool, and actually offered to let them read his letter.

"What! Read a letter from your 'best girl?'" said one of them; "not a bit of it. We like to chaff a little, but I hope we are gentlemen. The young lady would hardly care to have her letter read by this crowd," and he looked reproachfully at his friend.

"But I insist upon it," was the answer; "there is nothing in it to be ashamed of, except the spelling; that is a little shaky, I'll admit, but she won't care in the least. Read it and judge for yourself."

Thus urged, he took up the letter, shamefacedly enough, and read it. There were only a few words. First he laughed, then blew his nose suspiciously, and as he finished the letter he threw it on the table again, and rubbed his hand across his eyes as if troubled with dimness of vision. "Pshaw!" he said, "if I had a love-letter like that"—and he was silent.

"Fair play! let's have the letter," cried one of the others, with an uneasy laugh.

"I'll read it to you, boys," said their friend; "and I think you will agree with me that it is a model love-letter." And this is what he read:—

"My owen deer PaPa,—I sa mi PRairs every nite annd Wen I kiss yure Pict-ure I ASK god to bless you gOOd bi Pa Pa yure best gurl DOLLY."

For a moment or two the company remained silent, while the letter passed from hand to hand, and you would have said that every one had influenza by the sniffing that was heard.

Then one of the men jumped to his feet—"Three cheers for Dolly, and three cheers for Dick's best girl!" and it was the biggest shout heard in that hotel for many a long day.

Do your Duty.

Duty is that which is due, that which we owe to ourselves, to our fellow-creatures, to the God who made us. "Fear God (revere God, love Him) and keep His commandments, this is the whole duty of man," is one way of saying the same thing. "The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man." Every act of life the most common as much as the extraordinary is sacred if done sacredly.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine."

What we need to realise is that all things are for sacred uses and purposes. A mechanic can fit the parts of a machine together for God, and if he does, it is with the highest perfection he can show. She who sews a button on a garment and does it durably and grandly so as to please God in the manner of doing it, is as divinely engaged as the faithful priest in the temple, or the prophet in the pulpit. She is doing more than the sewing: she is shaping her own character into the likeness and image of God. A crossing sweep is as grand a character as the noblest patriot if he fills his place nobly and sublimely does his best. There is a holiness in every duty well-done, a sacredness in anything executed in a God-like manner. This striving to be perfect in all things is the true doing of God's will, the real preparation for a better future, the only pathway to heaven. Salvation from sin, from any hell of misery, is gained no other way. In this perfect fulfilment of duty there is a wholeness of character, a soundness of soul, a completeness and entirety of manhood which fits man for the brightest world that God has in store. God intends smallest duties as golden opportunities, and steps upon which to climb upward. No circumstance exists that may not contribute to this divine purpose. All things work together for good to them that love God. This gives a glory to human life, ennobles the humblest lot, and splendidly indicates how mankind is to be delivered from its woes and sufferings—when all men do their duty with completeness and joy.

"He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race."—Lowell.

Ian Maclaren's Creed.

As a welcome sign of the tendency of leading minds to draw near the simple faith that Unitarians hold, take the following "creed" which has been proposed for acceptance in all the churches by the well-known author, "Ian Maclaren" (the Rev. John Watson, of Liverpool), who is a Presbyterian:

> "I believe in the Fatherhood of God; I believe in the words of Christ; I believe in the pure life; I believe in the Beatitudes; I promise to trust in God; I promise to forgive my enemies; I promise to follow Christ."

A great many in America have openly accepted this "creed" as theirs; but some of "Ian Maclaren's" Presbyterian brethren have accused him of heresy for this and similar utterances. The more need for us to work on and spread the leaven till the whole lump be leavened.

Unitarians Believe—

That there is One God; and that all who ever so dimly recognise, and "in spirit and in truth" reverence, an Unseen Power which "makes for righteousness," are His accepted worshippers.

That Jesus of Nazareth was a great teacher, rightly called Christ (or the anointed), because "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts x., 38), and that true Christians are all those who try to think and act according to his precepts and example.

That the Bible is a record of the thoughts of devout men about God and His works and the way of serving Him, as from age to age He revealed Himself more fully; that it is thus pre-eminently the book of religious experience, and as such to be read and reverenced by all who would profit by the lessons of the past, so hardly learnt and so easily forgotten.

That man is a child of God, and has always free access to Him, as a son, even a prodigal, has to a good father.

That Prayer is a lifting-up of our thoughts to God, and the expression of the heart's desire in His Presence.

That Salvation consists in deliverance from misery, sin, and error; and that forms of religion are to be judged of by the measure of their efficiency in saving men from these evils.

That it will fare with us ill or well after death, just as we have lived ill or well in this world, according to the words of the prophet—"Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him."—Isaiah iii., 10-11.

Finally, that God is more Good than the best of fathers, and more Just than the most upright of Judges; that we can therefore commit ourselves to Him in absolute confidence that He will always do with us as is for our true welfare, here and everywhere, now and for ever.

And this, they maintain, is the true Catholic or Universal Faith which underlies all forms of religion, and which if a man believe and live by he will assuredly be saved.—C. Hargrove.

It is not God's Will.

It is God's will that man should also have a will of his own, that he should be free within limits to follow his own inclinations. Hence man's will is often opposed to God's will, and many things happen in human affairs which the Divine will is not directly responsible for.

Theodore Parker, the well-known Unitarian preacher and social reformer, of Boston, U.S.A., once delivered a stirring discourse on the saying of Jesus: "It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Amongst other things he said: "There are two classes of men who are weak and little; one is little by nature, consisting of such as are born with feeble powers, not strongly capable of self-help; the other is little by position, comprising men that are permanently poor and ignorant. When Jesus said: 'It is not God's will that one of these little ones should perish,' I take it he included both these classes—men little by nature, and men little by position. Furthermore, I take it, he said what is true, that it is not God's will one of these little ones should perish. Now, a man may be said to perish when he is ruined, or even when he fails to attain the degree of manhood he might attain under the average circumstances of this present age, and these present men. In a society like ours, and that of all nations at this time, as hitherto, with such a history—a history of blood and violence, cunning and fraud; resting on such a basis—a basis of selfishness; a society wherein there is a preference of the mighty, and a postponement of the righteous; where power is worshipped, and justice little honoured, though much talked of—it comes to pass that a great many little ones from both these classes actually perish. If Jesus spoke the truth, then they perish contrary to the will of God, and, of course, by some other will adverse to the will of God."

"The removal of these troubles must be brought about by a great change in the spirit of Society. Society is not Christian in form or spirit. So there are many who do not love to hear Christianity preached and applied, but to have some halting theology set upon its crutches. They like on Sunday to hear of the sacrifice, not to have mercy and goodness demanded of them. A Christian State after the pattern of that divine man, Jesus—how different it would be from this in spirit and in form!"

"What we want, to remove the cause of all this is, the application of Christianity to social life. Nothing less will do the work."

These words of Theodore Parker were uttered in the year 1846—nearly sixty years ago. Have we got much further since then?

A Little Leaven Leaveneth.

No Faith can show so much proportionate converting power as the rational religion of Unitarian Christianity. Without the aid of revivalist fireworks, with a striking absence of mere proselytising zeal, and with but little organised propaganda, it is nevertheless a remarkable fact that out of a total of about 370 Unitarian ministers in the United Kingdom over 90 of them, or about one-fourth, are converts from orthodox sects. Most of them came over by their own reading and thinking. The Truth has of itself an irresistible converting and convincing power upon open minds. Its very reasonableness wins the judgment of sincere seekers and inquirers. There are as many as twenty-five Unitarian ministers in active service in this country to-day who were trained as orthodox Independents, most of them were prepared for the ministry in the colleges of the "Congregational" Churches. At least twenty ministers now serving Unitarian Churches have come over from the Baptists, most of them having passed through the Baptist Colleges. More than a dozen may be counted who have been Church of England clergymen; and several have been Roman Catholic priests. Some have been Methodist ministers, others of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., LL.D., once one of the Chaplains to Queen Victoria, and with every prospect of ultimate promotion to a bishopric, had he remained in the Established Church, gave up all the worldly advantages of the Episcopalian connection in obedience to the convincing power of Unitarian Christianity. The Rev. John Page Hopps, well known throughout the kingdom as an earnest social reformer, came over from the Baptists. The Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A., once a University Extension lecturer for the University of Cambridge, had been a Roman Catholic priest and afterwards an adherent of the Church of England previous to entering the Unitarian ministry. Just over forty years ago, about six students of the Baptist College at Leicester became Unitarians through reading the works of Dr. W. E. Channing, and it has been said that the Baptist Body removed that college from Leicester to Chilwell largely because of that unsettlement.

If the Truth works its way so powerfully by its own influence with such effect, how much greater would be the results everywhere with more active missionary effort to help it, by spreading the message broadcast, and taking it to the people, that they who walk in darkness may see the greatness of the Light. The simple facts just given are so significant that they should mean very much to those seekers after truth who are not at rest in the old theology, but are longing for a Faith that is more reasonable and humane.

"Nothing walks with aimless feet;
Not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."—
Tennyson.

Theology—Old and New.

Theology is man's thought of God and His ways—man's opinion—and it ought not to be confounded with Religion which is a very different matter. Religion is Love—love to God, and love to man, and it is equally abundant in the lives of men holding very different opinions and opposite theological beliefs.

As theology is man's opinion about God and His ways, expressed in formulated creeds and doctrines, it is inevitable that with increasing light and change in men's opinions towards much wider views—theology is always subject to development, whereas Religion is always the same thing, at all times and in all men everywhere.

The evolution or development of theology is a very interesting subject. It is a record of human thought on the greatest of all subjects—the science of God. See what change there has been in theology even in Christendom. It has changed from old forms to new, from—God over all—to—God in all; One in three—to—One in all; God incarnate in Christ, a dated event in history—to—God incarnate in Humanity, a ceaseless process of creation; Revelation, an outward, miraculous, meteoric sort of thing—to—Revelation, in every reach of vision, a natural development in the soul; the Bible as source and final authority for truth—to—the Bible, a product of man the source of all Bibles, and God in the soul the source of authority; The Fall of Man from innocence—to—The Ascent of Man from brute ignorance; Original Sin—to—Inherited impulse and bad environment; Total depravity of man's nature—to—Human Nature essentially divine but undeveloped; Forgiveness, the pardoning act of an offended Deity—to—The peace of the soul that returns to the Right, a moral law in man; Regeneration, a crisis of sudden conversion—to—The gradual unfolding of the spiritual man out of the animal man; Salvation, a process completed by a Substitute—to—Salvation worked out by each man in upward striving after perfect life; A Future Judgment Day—to—A Judgment every moment in moral cause and consequence, in the immediate effect of every thought and word and deed; Heaven a prize for the few elect and chosen, Hell a penalty for the many, each localised and future—to—Heaven and Hell, inward conditions of the soul here and now wherever man is, and in all worlds to come, each producing its own outward conditions of peace or pain, of happiness or misery.

These changes have already been accomplished, and other changes will follow. Every new discovery of Truth will contribute towards the development of a grander Theology than has ever yet been conceived—for theology grows as "the thoughts of men are widened, with the process of the suns."

"I can of myself do nothing." "We must work the work of Him that sent me." "The father is greater than I."—Jesus.

PLEASE NOTE THIS!!!

Any Church desiring it, may have the entire use of this page for its own calendar or local announcements, in place of the matter now printed thereon—at easy terms. Orders and matter for the month should be sent at the earliest possible date. Terms on application given also for the half page.

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Quantities supplied as follows:—12 copies, 5d.; 25, 10d.; 50, 1s. 8d.; 100, 3s.; 250, 7s. 6d.; 500, 13s. 6d.; 1,000, 25s.; carriage free.

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"I am very pleased that you have undertaken such a noble work, and you deserve every encouragement that we as a religious body can give you."—Mr. WILLIAM TAYLOR (Bolton).

To Ministers and Churches.

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Make plentiful use of "Unity."

Secure a zealous Church agent for "Unity."

Have monthly Church calendar printed on back page of "Unity."

Special terms to any earnest youth who will act as "Unity" agent for his Church.

"Unity" is the new missionary agency for the spreading of the faith.

It is just the thing for propaganda distribution; for inquirers; for Sunday School teachers; for home instruction; for a Church magazine; and to send or give to friends everywhere.

"Unity," as Church Helper.

"Unity" may be made a help to a church in any of the following ways:—

(1) For sale or free distribution, copies, eight pages complete, without specially printed calendar, supplied at 3s. per 100, carriage free. If sold to 50 people at 2 copies for 1d., or to 8 people at 5d. per dozen for distribution, the cost for 100 copies is more than defrayed.

Thirty people subscribing 3d. per month to a literature secretary would pay for 250 copies per month for free distribution.

Each copy might be stamped with name of church by means of a rubber name stamp. Rubber stamps supplied to order.

(2) A monthly calendar specially printed on the back page at a charge of 5s. 6d. extra, full page, or 3s. 6d. ½ page. In full page there may be one column for calendar and another for Church Notes; ½ page, one column.

(3) A coloured cover for advertisements to defray all cost of free distribution can be supplied with "Unity" at the following terms:—

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Those churches which decide to take 250 or more copies per month, with calendar, should lose no time sending in their orders. Calendar matter to be in Editor's hands not later than 20th of each month.

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The Publisher desires to know how much support he can rely upon that he may be better able to make his arrangements for 1904.